



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

# News Release



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## **Water Quality, Clean Beaches are Key Goal of Transborder Agreement**

*State Officials Train Wastewater Treatment Operators from Mexico*

SACRAMENTO – As part of an historic environmental protection agreement between California and Mexico, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), sponsored a week-long class for 38 wastewater treatment plant operators, engineers and regulators from Mexico.

“This important cross-border training program will help protect water quality on both sides of the border,” said Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection. “We all deserve clean beaches and clean water, and this is a significant step toward our shared environmental protection goals.”

Sewage treatment plants from the Mexican border cities of Mexicali and Tijuana discharge wastewater into the New River and the Pacific Ocean just south of Tijuana which flow into California. The New River immediately flows through the California community of Calexico. Diluted wastewater that runs into the Pacific Ocean from Mexico is a known cause of beach closures along the coast of Southern California.

“Because the Water Board and the regional water boards recognize the importance of the watersheds that California and Mexico share, we have scheduled this class to protect water quality as population and industrialization increase along the border,” said Water Board Chair Charlie Hoppin. “California, the United States and Mexico will benefit from this partnership to maintain and improve professional standards.”

The class was held at the San Diego Regional Water Board headquarters and focused on ways to improve and protect water quality. The training course will serve as a model for Mexico as it develops a wastewater plant operator certification program. The class included topics such as an overview of Mexico’s regulations for the treatment of waste discharges, sources of domestic and industrial waste, as well as sewage treatment plant operation and maintenance and advanced treatment. The week of instruction included a field trip to the Padre Dam Treatment Plant in Santee, California.

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This training course is a result of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed in 2008 between Cal/EPA, Department of Food and Agriculture, California Natural Resources Agency, and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the United Mexican States. The agreement is helping to address climate change and other environmental issues to enhance environmental protection policies and sustainable natural resources.

To support environmental protection along the border region, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger created the landmark California-Mexico Border Relations Council (AB 3021, Núñez, 2006). The Secretary for Environmental Protection serves as the Council Chair. Members of the Council include the Secretaries of the Natural Resources Agency; Health and Human Services Agency; Business, Transportation and Housing Agency; Department of Food and Agriculture; and the California Emergency Management Agency. The Council oversees and collaborates on California-Mexico border issues, and has the authority to identify new Border priorities and fundable projects in the areas of infrastructure, trade, environment, health and security while supporting current and ongoing activities such as the Border Governors Conference, trade missions, border workgroups, and coordinating specific future projects with Mexico.

More information on the California-Mexico Border Relations Council can be found at [www.calepa.ca.gov/Border/CMBRC/](http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Border/CMBRC/). For more information on the Border Environmental Program go to [www.calepa.ca.gov/border/](http://www.calepa.ca.gov/border/). The website for the State Water Board is [www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov).